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ABSTRACT

This descriptive evaluation of an interactive media project in Rockford, Illinois, describes the use of video documentaries as a device in meeting community service needs. Objectives of the project were to design a program to train community residents in the use of audio and video tape equipment and provide professional and technical services for implementation of community-based documentation projects designed to initiate communication with local government officials. Twelve project activities are discussed, as well as case studies resulting from these activities and evaluations. (RAO)

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THE ROCKFORD INTERACTIVE MEDIA PROJECT

Title 1-A HEA

Evaluation Report

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August 1979

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Rationale for Evaluation

According to Steele (1973) "program evaluation...usually deals with old questions about programs. It's not trying to get generalizable information -- it's trying to get sound and reliable information to use within the context of the specific programs" (pp 30-31). Where program objectives are broad-based, as in the case of certain Title I community service and continuing education programs, the evaluation process concerns itself with "...a chain of events, starting with the initial exposure to an idea to the actual implementation of that idea and the consequences of implementation. Because broad-aimed programs for adults are generally viewed as a purposive type of education, intended to serve useful ends or functions, though not necessarily as a result of deliberate design, it seems appropriate to focus attention not only on intended consequences but also on unintended but anticipated consequences and unintended, unanticipated consequences..." (Farmer, in press, p.10). The Rockford Interactive Media Project falls within this category of broad-aimed programs.

The methodology to be used in evaluating the Rockford Project is based on Farmer, Sheats, and Deshler's (1970) report on an evaluation of Title I programs in California. In their report, they write:

> An effective methodology for the evaluation of broad-aim, largely unstandardized, and inadequately replicated action programs should, according to Weiss and Rein, be more descriptive and inductive than experimental in design. This type of methodology would

> have the following characteristics: It would be concerned with describing the unfolding form of experimental intervention, the reactions of individuals and institutions subjected to its impact, and the consequences, so far as they can be learned by interview and observation, for the use of field methodology, emphasizing interview and observation, though it would not be restricted to this. But it would be much more concerned with learning than with measuring. Second, it is very likely that the conceptual framework of the approach would involve the idea of system, and of the intervention as an attempt to change the system. The system perspective alerts the investigator to the need to identify the forces which are mobilized by the introduction of the program, the events in which aspects of the program are met and reacted to by individuals and institutions already on the scene, and the ways in which actors move in and out of the network of interrelationships of which the program is a constituent. It alerts the investigator to the possibility that important forces which have few interrelationships with the existing system - in this sense, alien forces - may appear on the scene (p. 16).

In approaching the evaluation of the Rockford Interactive Media Project, it was realized that two categories of projects exist, having equal importance. One has to do with acceptance of the innovation itself, that is, with learning to use the videotape recorder simply as a tool for gathering information about a community -- its agencies, institutions, and programs. The purpose is usually non-controversial. The second has to do with deliberate use of the videotape recorder for initiating the process of increased citizen participation in decision-making with respect to policies which affect the community. The second stage, being issue-oriented, may become controversial. The two stages or categories that have been mentioned are cited as concerns of the highest priority for policy research needs in a report entitled Voluntary Sector Policy Research Needs (1974) issued by the Center for A Voluntary Society. In the

evaluation of the Rockford Interactive Media Project, it will be shown that the case studies to be discussed fall into one or the other of these two categories.

For those case studies that fall under the first category, it is important to understand the process by which innovations are diffused. Rogers (1962) outlines five stages of what he calls the "adoption process":

1. Awareness. An individual becomes aware of an innovation, but knows little about it.
2. Interest. An individual develops interest in the innovation and wants more information about it.
3. Evaluation. An individual visualizes application of the innovation to his or her present or future problems and makes a decision about trying it out.
4. Trial. The individual uses the innovation in a limited way in order to determine whether it would be useful.
5. Adoption. The individual makes a decision to adopt the innovation as normal practice (pp. 81-86).

Rogers (1962) points out that in any situation concerned with innovations, there are five categories of adopters: Innovators, who are "venturesome" persons eager to try new ideas; Early Adopters, who seek the opinions of their peers and are respected by them; Early Majority, who "adopt new ideas just before the average member of a social system"; Late Majority,

who are "skeptical" of innovations and adopt them only under peer pressure; Laggards, whose ties to tradition cause them to yield slowly to innovations.

Clearly, a significant time component is involved. As Rogers suggests, it takes time for people to accept an innovation -- in the case of the Rockford Interactive Media Project, to accept the VTR unit. Once people have accepted it and gone through the necessary training, it takes additional time for them to recognize how it might be used in the community. If an individual or a group has used the VTR unit successfully in this first stage, they will begin to perceive its potential in the second stage, as a dynamic medium for initiating and maintaining dialogue for the purpose of solving community problems.

For the case studies that fall under the second category, it is important to understand the process of interactive media. The following account by Hénaut (1971), taken from a successful Canadian urban experiment, illustrates this process:

> Although the people were diffident at first, they had strong ideas about how to use this medium to further organize their community. They went out into the streets and interviewed the people about their problems, in order to learn more about the neighborhood and to make people think about what could be done. Then an edited half-hour tape was used to catalyze discussion at the beginning of a series of public meetings. This procedure was very effective; people plunged into the heart of the discussion, instead of being fearful about expressing themselves. The citizens also learned a lot about themselves, by viewing themselves in action during meetings and in discussions (pp. 114-115).

Another perspective on the process is provided in the following account by Niemi (1972), taken from a successful experiment in Alaska:

> When the issues have been identified, selected individuals or groups voice their opinions and offer solutions, and the sessions are filmed or taped. Later, the people involved in the interviewing edit the film in private, until they feel that it fairly represents their ideas.
>
> The edited film or tape is then viewed by the general community, so as to provoke discussion. Here is a crucial point in the process, the moment when the community learns where individuals stand on vital issues. When a consensus has been arrived at, a film or video tape is made to record the official position...(p. 28).

The merit of this process of problem-posing is, then, that it brings the vital elements of dialogue and consensus-formation -- and thus a more vigorous problem-solving capacity -- to community groups. In many cases, these groups have become alienated and apathetic because public agencies and institutions have ignored their needs or have provided token services that exacerbate instead of relieve the situation.

The principles of social intervention through interactive media have been enunciated as follows by Theodore (1975), who has worked extensively in Chicago with video intervention:

1. Video recording legitimizes an action.
2. Video recording and playback objectify a situation.
3. Making videotape supports group interaction.
4. Videotape playback helps structure a confrontation.
5. Videotape recording and playback provide means to move an action.
6. Videotape playback restates and summarizes an action (p. 7).

The evaluation of this project, based on the rationale that has been presented, will include the following headings: Background of the Community, Objectives, Project Activities, Case Studies of the Interactive Media Project, and Evaluations.

Background of the Community

Southwest Rockford is a community located within the city of Rockford, the second largest municipality in the State of Illinois. This 1,466-acre community is distinctively bordered by railroad tracks and the Rock River. Its population of over 20,000 is predominately black, although Italian-Americans and Hispanic-American groups are represented. A majority of the residents live in single and two-family substandard dwellings and have incomes only slightly above the federal poverty level. Over 50 percent of the population has less than a high school diploma. Self-determination and effective involvement in decision-making have been notably absent, partly because of the inability of the numerous, disparate groups to pool their efforts.

In 1977, the so-called Rockford Project was launched. Its purpose was to increase the self-sufficiency of the population of southwest Rockford through the recruitment and training of adult education community service assistants. As CETA workers, their task was to persuade the community to participate more actively in the process of decision-making with respect to public policy. The governing board of the Rockford Project, which worked closely with the Community Services Office of Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, assisted in the development of

the proposal for the Rockford Interactive Media Project. Due to the limited success of the parent project, the Interactive Media Project began under somewhat unfavorable circumstances. The reason is that the Rockford Project committee, which was seen as the nucleus of a new effort, did not take collective responsibility; however, some individuals did make a commitment to continue working for the committee through the Interactive Media Project.

Objectives

The objectives of the Rockford Interactive Media Project, as outlined in the proposal, were as follows:

> Specifically, the project will:
>
> co-operate with government officials, agencies, and community organizations in Rockford, Illinois;
>
> design a program to provide a minimum of twenty (20) minority, poor, and working-class community residents with the skills and technical experience to operate VTR and audio equipment;
>
> provide on-going professional and technical services, as well as the necessary hardware, for the implementation of at least six (6) community-based documentation projects designed to initiate communication with local government officials;
>
> establish and maintain linkages with the appropriate government offices to bring closure to the process;
>
> maintain an on-going comparative analysis of each medium in effecting two-way communication between government and the citizenry;
>
> disseminate process information (strengths and weaknesses) via cable television, on-the-air broadcasts, community access radio, video-playback sessions, the development of "product" tapes and a "methods" manual made available through a state-wide conference.

In order to accomplish the above program objectives, the program staff had responsibility for conducting the following activities:

Training of a team of southwest Rockford residents in the utilization of VTR and audio equipment.

Expansion and development of new liaison with community groups, organizations, and agencies in the southwest Rockford area.

The preparation of an analysis of the objectives and strategies of all collaborating groups, organizations, and agencies.

The development of audio and video documentation.

The establishment of listening groups throughout the community which will view the edited tapes and provide additional documentation.

The development of case studies on each media project for evaluation.

Project Activities

To carry out the objectives presented above, a staff member was selected by the board of the former Rockford Project and hired by the Community Services Office of Northern Illinois University; video and audio equipment was obtained; and space was made available in the Southwest Improvement Corporation's office. The staff member, Ms. Judy Carra, who is a member of the southwest Rockford community, had been active in various aspects of community life. She worked closely with Mr. Tom Heaney, Director of the Community Services Office at Northern Illinois University.

The first major activity was the training of Ms. Judy Carra and nine community members by the Director of Communications for Change, Tedwilliam Theodore, and his staff, in the use of video

as an interactive tool for communication. During these sessions, this group served as consultants to both the project staff and community members, helping them to acquire skill in interviewing and skill in the use of the VTR unit. During the remainder of the year, from October through June, an additional thirty-six community persons were trained by Ms. Judy Carra in the use of the VTR unit for community projects. The names of the total of forty-five community persons who were trained appear in the appendix. This number far exceeded the objective of providing such training to twenty members. In addition, Ms. Carra was trained by the staff of Communications for Change to edit raw tapes, in cooperation with a member of a project team, and to transform them into position or final tapes for use in that project.

Ms. Carra, in turn, trained four community members in the skill of editing tapes. This exemplifies the "unintended, unanticipated consequences" of broad-aim programs, as indicated earlier in the rationale. The names of these four people, along with two others who gained editorial expertise, also appear in the appendix.

The second major activity sponsored by Ms. Carra was the expansion and development of new liaison between the project and community groups, organizations, and agencies in southwest Rockford. Initially, a full-time coordinator Mr. Robert Warner, was available from the Community Services Office at Northern Illinois University, with responsibility for organizing the community. However, before the project could be fully launched, he left the Community Services Office in order to pursue graduate

study. His replacement, Mr. Larry Quarles, who had had extensive experience in interactive media, seemed an ideal community organizer to assist Ms. Carra in interacting with individuals and groups in the community. However, his personal problems and the fact that the community did not accept him caused Mr. Quarles to leave the project, with the result that full responsibility for the project devolved upon Ms. Carra. In conjunction with Ms. Stephanie Stephens, a graduate assistant in the Community Services Office at Northern Illinois University, the trainees involved in the interactive media project became a viable organization of their own.

Two of the new liaisons that Ms. Carra was able to develop were with the Urban Arts Committee of the Rockford Council for the Arts and Sciences, in regard to the funding of the Alegria Arts Festival; and with the Public Access Cable System for the possible cablecasting of future programs. There was continued strengthening of liaisons with organizations that had been involved in the previous Rockford Project.

The major activity was the preparation of an analysis of objectives and strategies of collaborating groups. This activity was somewhat limited because over half of the projects in this broad-aim program fell into the first category mentioned in the rationale -- that of simply learning to use the VTR as a tool for gathering information for use by a particular group. The remainder of the projects belong to the interactive category. Many of these were short, concentrated efforts, while others were aborted. Hence, there were few objectives and strategies to

analyze. Three that offered this possibility were Operation Facelift, Branch Library Closures, and the Committee to Retain the Interactive Media Project (CRIMP). They will be reported upon in the analysis of these projects.

The fourth major activity was the development of audio and video documentation. Here, an unintended, unanticipated consequence of this broad-aim project was the discovery that community groups were not interested in audio documentation. They already possessed such skills and had used audio documentation for taping minutes of organizational meetings. Video documentation is available for a majority of the projects that were completed during the year-long duration of the Rockford Interactive Media Project.

The final major activity was the development of case studies on each media project for the purpose of evaluating it. Not only was a file developed which included the necessary documentation, but each interactive media project was also evaluated on the basis of an instrument prepared by Wagner (1974) of the University of Saskatchewan. Its purpose was to provide predictors for the success or failure of an interactive media project by determining the risk level perceived by the person or persons involved in the project and the reference level. This instrument is also included in the Appendix, along with a list of concepts that are used with this instrument.

Case Studies of the Interactive Media Project

Introduction

As discussed in the rationale, the activities that were developed through the Rockford Interactive Media Project could be categorized as either information -- "service" -- or social interaction -- "advocacy." The former were the non-threatening projects that enable the user to become acquainted with the innovation -- the VTR unit. The latter characterized the projects which were tied to specific issues. A review of the calendar of events from August, 1978, to June, 1979, shows that not all of the service projects occurred during the beginning of the Interactive Media Project, nor did all of the advocacy ones occur at the end (Figure 1). Rather, it is apparent that a combination of the two types of projects was being carried on throughout the year.

Service Projects

Twelve of the Interactive Media Projects fall into the "service" category. The citizens of southwest Rockford responsible for initiating these projects became aware of the potential of the VTR as a tool for information dissemination. As a result, they participated in the video equipment training sessions. Their decision to try the VTR in the field indicates that they had moved to stage 4 of Rogers' adoption process, which was outlined in the rationale.

A listing of these service projects and their status as of July 1, 1979, is found in Table 1. Since each one is unique, no attempt will be made to force them into

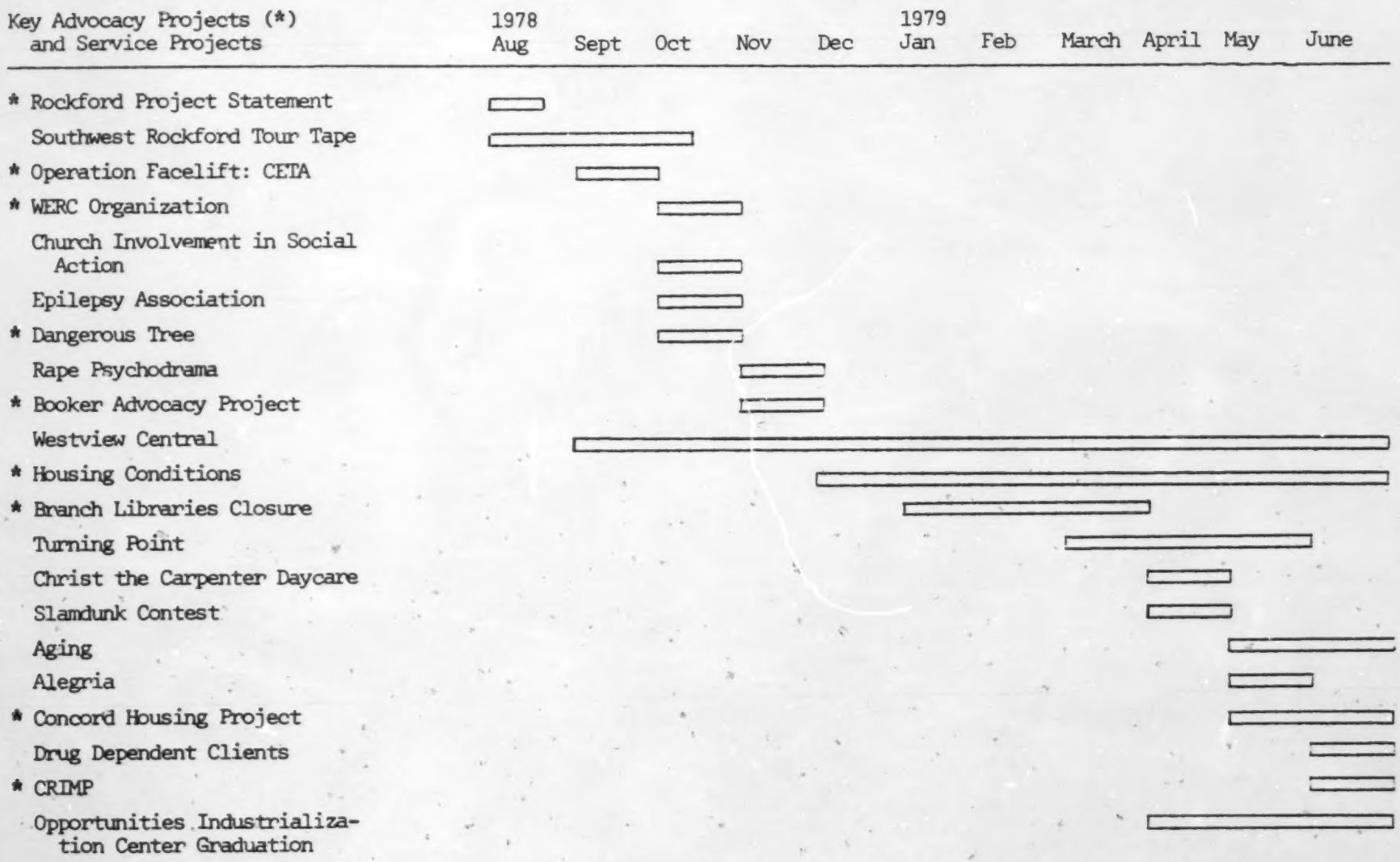

Figure 1

Timeline for Interactive Media Projects

Table 1

ROCKFORD INTERACTIVE MEDIA: SERVICE PROJECTS

Project (Case)	Status
1. Tour Tape of Southwest Rockford	Completed
2. Epilepsy	Completed
3. Church Involvement in Social Action	Completed
4. Rape Psychodrama	Completed
5. Westview Central	In process
6. Turning Point	In process
7. Christ the Carpenter Day Care	Completed
8. Slam Dunk Contest	Completed
9. Opportunties Industrial Center Graduation	In process
10. Aging	Completed
11. Alegria	Completed
12. Drug Dependent Clients	Completed

artificial categories for description and anaylsis. Instead, each case study will be reported separately. As mentioned earlier, each case study was evaluated in terms of Wagner's criteria that accounted for the factor of risk and the decision to complete, modify, or abandon the project.

Case 1: Tour Tape of Southwest Rockford

The genesis of Case 1 was the Rockford Project statement, the first tape completed in the category of advocacy projects (Case I). The initial purpose of this tour tape was to provide the President and other members of the Northern Illinois University community with an account of Southwest Rockford. The Coordinator of the Interactive Media Project, who had been recently trained on the equipment, volunteered to do the tape. As a resident of southwest Rockford, she had originally been scheduled to conduct a tour of this area for the new NIU President. She and the other individuals who developed the Rockford Project Statement felt that this background information was necessary for use with the statement. Among the subjects covered in the Tour Tape of southwest Rockford were housing, schools, social services, and industry. The completed tape was edited and shown to the President.

This case study was evaluated for risk level and process decision, according to the criteria established in Wagner's model. In Table 2, the expected outcome is shown. The risk factor in the decision to complete the tape was low, as the decision-makers were in control of the situation. They were able to perceive

Table 2

SERVICE PROJECTS: DECISION-MAKING--RISK FACTOR

RISK LEVEL

Case	Control	Outcome Visibility	Value of Potential Loss	Risk Judgment
1	High	High	Low	Low
2	High	High	Low	Low
3	Low	High	Low	Low
4	High	High	Low	Low
5	Low	Low	Low	Low
6	Low	Low	High	High
7	High	High	Low	Low
8	High	High	Low	Low
9	High	High	Low	Low
10	High	High	Low	Low
11	Low	High	Low	Low
12	High	High	High	High

the outcome, and the factor value of potential loss was also low.

The decision to complete this tape and the factors affecting it are reported in Table 3. Once again, the immediacy of the information and its importance were highly rated by the evaluation team. Since this was an initial service project, it was rated as low in routine.

Case 2: Epilepsy

At the request of the Rock Valley Epilepsy Association, Inc., the Coordinator agreed to tape a house meeting where eight female epileptics and two leaders discussed what it means to be an epileptic. The purpose behind the tape was to help them to see themselves as others see them and to prepare themselves for a later 30 to 60 minute commercial tape. Many members of the group expressed a degree of nervousness and some even anticipated having seizures. All expressed a desire to see themselves in the throes of a seizure, in order to know what happens to them.

In the taping session, one member of the group operated the camera. Each of the eight epileptics spoke for five minutes and the information conveyed, along with the discussion, was later viewed in its entirety by the group. The members of the group, with one exception, felt that they had done a good job of expressing themselves and their feelings. Due to the personal nature of this tape, it has been recycled.

Once again, Table 2 shows that the risk factor was low, as the group had control and knew the outcome. The value of poten-

Table 3

SERVICE PROJECTS: PROCESS DECISION

REFERENCE LEVEL

Case	Information Immediacy	Issue Strength	Routineness	Process Decision
1	High	High	Low	Completed
2	High	High	Low	Completed
3	High	Low	High	Completed
4	High	High	Low	Completed
5	High	Low	High	In process
6	High	High	Low	In process
7	High	High	Low	Completed
8	High	Low	High	Completed
9	High	Low	High	Completed
10	High	High	High	Completed
11	High	Low	High	Completed
12	High	High	High	Completed

tial loss was low, and one could only hypothesize this variable if a seizure had occurred.

In Table 3, the information immediacy and issue strength were high, as these individuals were all members of a concerned group. Since this was an initial involvement, the "routineness factor" was low.

Case 3: Church Involvement in Social Action

This project had as its purpose the preparation of a tape for use in church workshops. The Rockford minister who requested the use of the equipment has been active in the urban ministry. The resulting product tape would include interviews with people from three different churches. Their personal testimony would reveal how they got involved in the secular activities of their community.

From Table 2, it is noted that although the control factor was seen as low, the outcome was seen as high with limited potential loss. Thus, there was a low risk judgment for this project.

As for the data in Table 3, this project has high value for information immediacy. The issue factor was rated low, since it was not at a highly emotional level, and the routineness of the topic was high, as expected. This was the area of concern of the urban minister.

Case 4: Rape Psychodrama

The purpose of the Rape Psychodrama was to produce a tape for use as part of an hour-long program over commercial television on the topic "Women Speak Out." This program, which was televised on December 17, 1978, was a cooperative effort by the National Organization for Women and the Rockford Women's Television Coalition. The psychodrama was presented by the Lifeworks Reality Project. In reviewing this tape, the evaluators found that although some of the players' performances were substandard, audience analysis of their actions indicated a high degree of sensitivity to the problems of rape. Thus, a highly informative tape was produced by the Coordinator for telecast as part of a longer commercial program.

In Table 2, the expected decision-making risk factor is reported as low, as there was high control and high outcome visibility. Furthermore, there was an estimated low rating for value of potential loss by the subjects involved.

In Table 3, the process decision to complete was observed to be high, due to immediate value of the information, and high importance was given to the issue of rape. The low rating for routineness is due to the lack of previous exposure that members of this group have had in the use of media.

Case 5: Westview Central

At the request of the Organizer of Westview Central, the Coordinator was asked to do taping around topics that focus on problems in the area that require physical development. Some

topics considered were housing conditions, derelict buildings, police protection, and numerous other areas of concern. Although a number of tapes were made, the necessary editing to put the project together never did take place.

In Table 3, the project is described as "in process." Some reasons for this state are provided in Table 2, where the risk judgement was seen as low and the perceived control of the project was low. The result is low outcome visibility but, had the project been completed, it would have had high visibility.

Returning to Table 3, it was observed that there would be high information immediacy for the topics presented. The key to the fate of this project relates to the perceived low rating that was given to the issues by the individuals concerned. One of the problems was that the documentation was viewed chiefly as an information or promotional device and none of the multitude of issues were placed in direct focus. If this had happened, this project would have moved into the advocacy category.

Case 6: Turning Point

At the request of St. Elizabeth's Center Youth Outreach Program, the idea of doing a tape on juvenile problems was presented to the Coordinator of Interactive Media. Prior to this taping, the Coordinator taped youths at the Center in order that they might become familiar with the VTR unit. Two staff members of St. Elizabeth's Center, who were trained to use the video equipment, taped the material for "Turning Point". However,

this material was not edited, as the two members behind this project became involved in the Committee to Retain the Interactive Media Project. Plans have been made to edit and utilize this tape with parents in the near future.

The two members of St. Elizabeth's felt that this was a high risk project, as both their level of control and outcome visibility had to be rated as low. Furthermore, Table 2 shows that the value of potential loss would be high to them if their program was not accepted by the parents.

As brought out in Table 3, the immediacy of this information and the strength of the issues were both perceived as high. Since the members of St. Elizabeth had not been involved in this type of activity previously, the routineness reference was seen as low.

Case 7: Christ the Carpenter Day Care Center

The purpose of this project was two-fold: 1) to inform the board of activities at the Day Care Center and 2) to give the teachers insights into their techniques, mannerisms, and behavior when working with children. The minister of the church undertook training to make and edit the tape. The actual editing of this tape was completed under the direction of the Coordinator.

In Table 2, this project was seen as one with high control and high outcome visibility, but it was low in value of potential loss. Thus, the risk judgment of this project was low.

Since the goals of the project stressed information immediacy and issue strength, both of these items were rated high. The routineness factor was rated low, as the minister was still acquiring expertise with the equipment.

Case 8: Slam Dunk Contest

Case 8 represented an attempt by two staff members of Concord Recreation Center to document an activity at the Center which was no longer funded. Both the taping and editing were done entirely by these two staff members. The final tape was shown to participants in the contest and the Board of the Concord Recreation Center.

Since the control and outcome visibilty were high and value of potential loss low, the risk level of this project, as shown in Table 2, was low.

As for reference level, the immediacy of information was high, as was the routineness of the process. However, as shown in Table 3, the strength of the issue was low. It was the hope of the Concord Recreation Center staff that the making of a documentary tape would bring the issue to the attention of others.

Case 9: Opportunities Industrialization Center Graduation

The two members of the Concord Recreation Center taped this graduation event. This tape has not been edited.

As brought out in Table 2, this project was high in control and outcome visibility and low in value of potential loss. And, as a low risk project, it was completed as both immediacy of information and routineness were high.

Case 10: Aging

At the request of the Winnebago County Council of Aging, three staff members were trained to tape a series of events to be used as the basis of a series of programs on the elderly for local cablevision. One staff member was trained to edit. With the help of the Coordinator, this staff member edited content for the following seven programs: 1) What is a Senior? 2) Seniors active in the community, 3) Services for independence, 4) Health care, 5) Money, 6) Preparing for retirement, and 7) Seniors, Middlers, Children.

These seven tapes formed a low risk project, as they were high both in control and visibility and low in value of potential loss. Support to complete this project was based on high immediacy of information, issue strength, and routineness.

Case 11: Alegria

The Third Annual Alegria (meaning joy and happiness in Spanish) Arts Festival was a great success. This southwest Rockford event included both dance and musical performances, exhibits, and activities for both youth and adults. The Coordinator and other members of the community who were trained to use the VTR equipment documented this year's festival for review in the community and for presentation to the Urban Arts Committee. This Committee's comment on the edited tape was that "it was a beautiful yet rough account of a wonderful event." Editing of this tape was a joint effort by the Coordinator and a member of the community.

As found in Table 2, the risk judgment for this project was low. The high outcome visibility was the supporting factor. The actual completion of this project was due to the observed high ratings for the immediacy of the information and routineness of using the equipment by members of the community.

Case 12: Drug Dependent Clients

At the request of the Northern Illinois Council for Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, the Coordinator trained a member of this agency to use the VTR unit. This person taped a peer group counseling situation in order that addicts might see themselves as others see them. The tape was recycled immediately for reasons of confidentiality.

In Table 2, all variables were reported as high. The risk judgment could be perceived as high because the value in potential loss was high for people in a group counseling situation.

Completion of the project was due to the high value given to the immediacy of the information and the strength of the issue. Also, the agency member knew the routineness of the process being taped.

Advocacy Projects

Nine of the Interactive Media Projects fell into the "advocacy" category. These projects represented efforts to begin documenting problems in order to initiate communication between members of the southwest Rockford community and representatives of

agencies and government who may effect a solution to the problem. Once again, the uniqueness of each advocacy project dictates its handling as a case study (Table 4).

Case I-Rockford Project Tape

As mentioned in "Background of the Community" the Rockford Project Committee was seen as the nucleus of the Interactive Media Project. Prior to arrival of the video equipment, the Coordinator interviewed ten members from this group in order to learn about the need for and direction of the Rockford Project and the role of this group in advising the Interactive Media Project. Initial sessions were recorded on newsprint, and two later sessions were taped. The four members who attended the second taping discussed failings of the prior year, and made a commitment to work as individuals for the benefit of the community. They felt that, in the future, there was a possibility of working together on overlapping goals. After the tapes were edited by the Coordinator, only two participants viewed them.

In Table 5, the risk judgment of the group was seen as low. This rating was based on a low perception of control by this group and a low rating in value of potential loss. Only two of the group envisioned the outcome and, as a result, the project was abandoned. This decision was based on low ratings for immediacy of information and issue strength (Table 6). The Coordinator felt that delay in acquiring the VTR equipment resulted in the loss of this issue. Although the Rockford

Table 4

ROCKFORD INTERACTIVE MEDIA: ADVOCACY PROJECTS

	Project	Status
I.	Rockford Project Statement	Abandoned
II.	Operation Facelift: CETA	Completed
III.	Lottie Blakeley's Dangerous Tree	Aborted
IV.	WERC/Forrest Street Blockclub	Modified
V.	Booker Advocacy Project	Aborted
VI.	Housing Conditions	Aborted
VII.	Branch Libraries Closure	Completed
VIII.	Concord Housing Project	In process
IX.	CRIMP	Completed

Table 5

ADVOCACY PROJECTS: DECISION-MAKING -- RISK FACTOR

	RISK LEVEL			
Case	Control	Outcome Visibility	Value of Potential Loss	Risk Judgment
I	Low	High	Low	Low
II	Low	High	High	High
III	---	---	---	---
IV	High	Low	High	High
V	Low	Low	Low	Low
VI	Low	High	High	High
VII	High	Low	High	High
VIII	High	Low	High	High
IX	Low	High	Low	High

Table 6

ADVOCACY PROJECTS: PROCESS DECISION

Case	Information Immediacy	Issue Strength	Routineness	Process Decision
I	Low	Low	Low	Abandoned
II	High	High	Low	Completed
III	---	---	---	Aborted
IV	High	Low	High	Modified
V	High	Low	Low	Aborted
VI	High	High	Low	Aborted
VII	High	High	Low	Completed
VIII	High	High	Low	In process
IX	High	High	Low	Completed

Project was over, the value of this experience with interactive media led one participant who had viewed the tape to become trained in the use of equipment and to become involved in other projects.

Case II-Operation Facelift: CETA

The CETA Advisory Council, acting on the recommendation of CETA staff, cut a CETA-funded workcrew of 18 men. A major concern in the southwest Rockford community was that a majority of the men affected would be the most recent hirees who had not established an accepted work record for the private sector. Yet this crew had an excellent record in relation to the time spent.

The Interactive Media Project was approached by the Southwest Improvement Corporation, the sponsor of Operation Facelift, to make a tape that would focus attention on the poor CETA process in making this decision. Workers, recipients of services, and administrators of Facelift were interviewed. The edited tape was shown to the Chairperson and the entire CETA Advisory Council for reconsideration. The tape was also viewed by some members of the southwest Rockford community prior to the final decision. The limited time line did not allow for more people to view the tape.

This tape was seen as threatening to the funding source. However, the decision to retain the cuts was upheld. Members of the community who were directly involved realized that they had lost the issue, but still found value in the process of being able to voice their concerns and gain reconsideration of the issue.

In Table 5, the members of the community realized that their risk was high as they had no control of the decision-making process. In addition, a high perceived rating for visibility of the issue and the value in potential loss contributed to the high risk.

The project was completed, as shown in Table 6, as both immediacy of information and strength of the issue were observed as high.

Case III-Lottie Blakeley's Dangerous Tree

At the request of a senior citizen, the Coordinator visited the site where there had been problems of falling tree limbs and troublesome roots. The site visit revealed that the city had taken care of the falling limbs. Since the neighbors did not perceive a problem and the senior citizen was happy with the situation, the project was aborted.

Case IV-Westend Revitilization Council (WERC) Organization and Forest Avenue Blockclub

At the request of a board member of the Westend Revitilization Council (WERC), video tape equipment was used to tape the annual meeting of the WERC Community Congress. The purpose of this tape was to attempt to promote WERC's original purpose of organizing blockclubs. The actual taping of the Congress became a very threatening activity, as a takeover of leadership occurred by a community group interested in changing the mission of WERC to a social service agency.

The tape of the Congress was seen by a number of members of the community, and their views of the Congress

were taped along with those members of the Forest Avenue Blockclub who had attended the Congress and were trying to analyze what had happened.

The risk level for decision-making was high, as the control was out of the hands of the group requesting the tape. As a result, there was a low perceived outcome visibility. The value of potential loss was also perceived to be high. Wagner (1974) suggested that there is "some evidence to support the indirect relationship between the outcome visibility factor and risk level through the VPL (Value of potential loss factor)" (p. 7.)

In this project, the decision was modified by taping reactions to the WERC Congress. As shown in Table 6, the immediacy of information was perceived as high, but the timing that is so important to the strength of an issue was lost; hence, the low rating for this variable.

Case V-Booker Advocacy Project

Two trainers from the Booker Washington Center checked out the equipment in order to tape school-related problems. Plans were made to follow up initial contacts with interviews of counselors. As the project was aborted, the ratings reflected a loss of interest in it.

Case VI-Housing Conditions

With the assistance of the staff of Communications for Change, one member of the southwest Rockford community was trained

in the use of video equipment in order to interview occupants of an apartment which needed major repairs. The trainee and an assistant shot excellent footage. Plans were made to show this material to members of the community in general and to church audiences. This advocacy project was aborted, and the reasons are suggested in Table 5. With limited control, high visibility, and a high rating in value of potential loss, the individuals decided that the risk was too high. This decision was made even though they realized the high importance of the immediacy of the information and the strength of this issue.

Case VII-Branch Libraries Closure

In January, 1979, the librarian of the Montague Branch Library contacted the Coordinator about the proposed closing of the Rockford Branch Libraries. This librarian had previous knowledge of interactive media through the Operation Facelift Project. As a result, an awareness existed of the potential of VTR for facilitating dialogue in the decision-making process. At the request of the branch librarians, the Coordinator joined this group as they pondered a course of action that they might take concerning what they considered was an arbitrary administrative decision. Two of the six branches were located in Southwest Rockford -- Montague and Westend. An initial tape was made by the Coordinator on the issue of closing the libraries. This tape was shown at a meeting between the branch managers and the Board of Directors of the Rockford Public Library and also in the branch libraries. As a result of the impact of this tape,

the Chairperson of the Board of Directors agreed to give the Board's position on why the branch libraries should be closed as an economic measure. This response was shown to branch librarians, the supervisory staff of the Rockford Public Library, and members of communities affected by the proposed closure.

The Board came up with an alternative financial measure to keep the branch libraries open. The solution was a ten-cent user fee for each book that was going to be taken out of the library. To counteract this proposed action, a new tape was made from interviews with 50 users representing all segments of society. This tape, along with other messages via the mass media, forced the Board to rescind the ten-cent user fee.

The next course of action was taken by the branch managers, who met with the main library supervisors and shared with them the tapes that had been produced. The branch libraries requested that the main branch supervisors join them in going to the board with the proposed solutions that they had devised.

At the next supervisors' meeting, the VTR unit was available for taping the sessions. However, at the request of the Director of Libraries, a vote was taken to determine whether the media should be allowed to tape this ongoing discussion. By a vote of 8-7, the taping was denied.

On the recommendation of the Library Board, an April 3 referendum was approved, asking voters whether the library tax should be increased by 3 cents per $100.00 assessed valuation.

a second year. Members of the community who had received training and had used the VTR unit were told that guidelines required repossession of the equipment on June 30, 1979. Although the Interactive Media Project was only funded for one year, there had been an understanding that the equipment would remain in the community, in the hope that the project could continue indefinitely.

On May 25, 1979, 20 individuals who participated in the Interactive Media Projects met to discuss the issue of recall of the video equipment. What the meeting accomplished was the unifying of these many diverse individuals in order to focus on a major community issue. The meeting was taped so that the suggestions offered might be used for a course of action. Chairpersons were selected to plan a further strategy for action. Members of CRIMP wrote a letter to the State Director, Title IA, requesting a meeting to re-evaluate the decision to recall the equipment. In addition, those individuals who had used or trained on the equipment offered their support by directing letters from their organization to the Title I Office. The result was a meeting with the Director and eventual approval for the community to use the equipment for a second year.

For members of the community, this was a high risk decision. However, as shown in Table 5, the concept of control was seen as low, along with the concept for value of potential loss. The outcome visibility was seen as high. This rating was also true for immediacy of information, as a number of projects were ongoing and of great issue strength. The rallying together to save the

equipment accomplished the task of unifying the citizens into an organization. Due to the demise of the earlier Rockford Project, the coming together of a new committee was not seen as important. However, the issue of possible loss of this equipment resulted in its formation.

Evaluation

Introduction

As brought out in the rationale, community action programs like the Rockford Interactive Media Project are broad-aimed programs. The methodology that is most effective for evaluating such programs is the interview and observation. During the course of the year, 25 residents of southwest Rockford who were involved in one or more of the 21 projects were interviewed. In addition, the evaluators have spent considerable time in the field as observers of the Interactive Media Projects.

Their findings are in addition to the process evaluation which each group went through in the planning and carrying through of a project. Wagner's conceptual scheme was used for this data, which have been reported earlier along with a descriptive account of the case studies.

It is important to point out that a decision was made not to use the I-E Scale (Liverant and Scodel, 1960) and Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) (Shostrom, 1962). This decision was made on the basis of unintended, unanticipated consequences of broad-aimed programs which were mentioned earlier. For the service projects that related to the acceptance of interactive

media as an innovation, the instruments mentioned above were inappropriate. Since individuals using the VTR unit in this first stage were concerned with projects of an information nature, the I-E Scale involving decision-making under conditions of risk did not apply (Liverant and Scodel, 1960).

In the case of the POI, the instrument "is a self-report instrument designed to assess values, attitudes, and behavior relevant to Maslow's concept of a self-actualizing person" (Bloxom, 1972). This assessment was not directly related to the immediate adoption process which was the concern of individuals in these first stage projects.

For the second stage projects, the I - E could not be used as the issues emerged overnight. As mentioned in the rationale, it is important, when evaluating a broad-aimed program, to be more concerned with learning than with measuring. Any attempt to over-emphasize the latter would have turned the group away from using interactive media as a means for presenting their case.

Again, the use of the POI did not seem appropriate at this time.

The Interactive Media Project

Many aspects of the operation of the Interactive Media Project have been mentioned in other sections of this report. Important to the success of a project is its location and available staff. The availability of space in a central storefront location was an immediate asset to the program. The fact that the project was located in the office of the Southwest Business Association enabled it to have high immediate visibility.

The Coordinator who was selected brought to the project a thorough understanding of the community. Her previous involvement in various aspects of life in southwest Rockford enabled her to assume this assignment with the support of individuals, groups, and agencies in this area. To acquire the competencies necessary to carry the assignment, the Coordinator not only quickly acquired the skills needed to use the VTR unit and to edit the raw tape, but bacame a competent trainer as well. The evaluators observed a number of training sessions conducted by the Coordinator. These sessions displayed a sensitivity to the fears and concerns that adult learners bring to a new learning experience. Through the establishment of a climate of trust, the trainer assisted adults from the community to systematically move from one step to another and quickly acquire the competence necessary to take the equipment out on the streets. One additional reason for this success in training was the purchase and distribution to all trainees of two excellent manuals on VTR -- The Portable Video Handbook and Taping It Together: A Video Manual for Community Groups.

Another factor that led to the success of the Interactive Media Project was the selection of consultants who were well versed in the use of interactive media as a tool for community change. Dr. John Ohliger, media consultant from Madison, brought to the project the insights gained from some thirty years of professional work in using media in various types of adult learning activities. Mr. Tedwilliam Theodore and his staff at Communications for Change provided initial training and assis-

tance in editing the tapes. In addition, Mr. Theodore suggested strategies that might be used by groups in the interactive media projects.

Two other major factors that affected the development of projects were the demise of the initial advisory board from the Rockford Project and loss of the community organizer who was mentioned earlier. In retrospect, although these two actions handicapped the project at certain stages, the loss enabled the community to come together naturally at the end of the project and,as a result, to have a much stronger grassroots organization in CRIMP to relate to sensitive issues that face the people of southwest Rockford during Year Two.

All of these observations have related to the important factor of process. The Interactive Media Project activities resulted in the development of a number of tapes -- products. The evaluators have had the opportunity to view most of the service projects and all of those dealing with advocacy. The edited tapes not only present a message, but are of very high caliber. For example, the Rape Psychodrama tape was included in a Channel 17 (NBC) program. The Aging tapes were shown over the Rockford cablevision station, as was the tape on Alegria.

Evaluation: Service Projects

The rationale suggests that projects which focused on the adoption of an innovation were chiefly concerned with how this innovation might be used as a tool for gathering information about a community -- its agencies, institutions, and programs.

Thus, the important first step was becoming acquainted with the potential of the innovation -- the use of the VTR unit.

As they proceeded through the first three stages of the adoption process, most of the community members became aware of the potential strengths of this electronic medium through personal contact with the Coordinator. However, two individuals learned about this innovation through the informal networking of social service agencies. As one would expect, perception of the availability of a new process for community development is closely tied to a personal contact.

Prior to the decision to try the innovation, community members undertook training in use of the equipment. At this time, a number of people commented on a heightened perception of the potential of this medium as a tool to document an activity in a community.

The issue of commitment and adoption of this innovation to one's own project was made on the basis of a number of reasons. Among them were 1) the very novelty of the VTR can be used to bring people together and,as a result,can facilitate consciousness-raising; 2) the intimate nature of this medium suggests a new way of handling a wide range of experiences; and 3) documentation of an activity may be a more effective way of reaching the community with new information -- in other words, one community group can educate others.

After completing their initial service project, participants had an increased awareness of the potential use of this medium. It was felt that the process helped to clarify goals

by presenting pertinent information about a community activity; and, in the actual presentations, it enabled groups to make both individual and group statements about a topic.

The final consensus was that individuals concerned with the service projects developed a commitment to using the equipment in future. Furthermore, at least two members had already moved from involvement in service projects to advocacy projects which more fully utilized the potential of interactive media.

Evaluation: Advocacy Projects

The very nature of advocacy projects places participants in the role of media activists. The issue orientation of these projects was precisely the type of activity that the Interactive Media Project was designed to stimulate.

Initial involvement in the projects was slow in materializing. One reason which emerged in the service projects was the need for time to accept a new innovation -- in this case, interactive media. Another reason was a sense of apathy, best described in the position taken by a community leader of southwest Rockford whose description of community development follows:

> Citizens can participate in formulating the final results of projects selected (by the city) and that is all the citizens wish to have is some say so.

Another position which was stated during a meeting of one advocacy project was that there is a need for outside organizers to take care of the community's wants. One potential tool for meeting this need was actually being used to record this statement -- the VTR unit from the Interactive Media Project.

Although most of the activists learned about the Project through contact with the Coordinator, one individual expressed concern over his delayed use of the equipment. He felt badly that he had waited so long and wished that he had become involved at the beginning. Another member of this team praised the potential strength of the VTR unit as a tool to record a position in the following comment: "If they run away, I love it. If they talk to you, I love it more. Either way, I caught them." This

comment was echoed by another person: "We would use it again and again and again, because our long-range goal is to become involved."

In reviewing the advocacy projects, the first one, the Rockford Project Statement had as its goal the development of a statement which might be used to open up more dialogue between the Board and representatives from Northern Illinois University. Initial brainstorming sessions with comments written on newsprint were followed by taping of comments on the possibility of working together on overlapping goals. As brought out in the case study, earlier arrival of the equipment might have saved this project, which was abandoned for lack of interest.

Operation Facelift, which focused on the loss of eighteen CETA positions, became the first advocacy project that utilized the potential of interactive media. Since time was critical, the Coordinator was asked to record the positions of people involved in Operation Facelift. Although this project failed to change the decision made by CETA, it allowed the people involved in Facelift to be heard by establishing a mechanism for dialogue with government officials. By using the VTR unit, the individuals involved in Facelift felt that they had gained time which allowed them to have a hearing in the community and enabled other people to understand the positions taken by the Operation Facelift staff, employers, and the men who were affected by the decision.

The great contribution of this interactive project was recognition by community members who were involved of the potential of interactive media as a tool for assisting people to become part of a process. Thus, awareness of process was recognized as an important outcome of this activity. There was a general consensus among representatives of this group, when they were interviewed, that the taped statements helped clarify the issue. One major shortcoming that was mentioned was the absence of a good forum to enable more people to see the tapes.

As for the future, one person felt that media intervention had potential, but carried with it a risk factor,as it enabled people with relatively little power to begin dialogue with decision-makers. The fact that these decision-makers might have to make a commitment on tape, so that the man on the street could see and hear what they are saying, could anger the decision-makers.

The WERC Organization/Forest Avenue Blockclub Project began with the taping of a controversial meeting of the Community Congress. Reaction to the taping of this event was so great that it necessitated the erasing of comments made by some participants. Analysis of this meeting resulted in the taping of reactions to what happened by members of the Forest Avenue Blockclub. The viewing of this second tape was valuable to them in analyzing their position. More important, this experience caused one participant to remark:

> Having this equipment available is important for people in the neighborhood. It is vital and essential to them in particular when they view a problem and determine what it means to them.

Another person felt that, in future, analysis of community problems would enable individuals to take a proactive stance, instead of a reactive one.

The decision to close the branch libraries became the second major project in which interactive media was utilized for communication with decision-makers at a higher level.

There was a general consensus by branch librarians that the use of interactive media was a very effective tool in getting them together and, as a result, in helping them clarify their role. By using the videotape in their decision-making sessions, the group had an opportunity to observe, later, the different positions or philosophies that were held. One outcome was the working out of this problem together. The resulting tape impressed the Library Board, and the community was impressed that the branch librarians had interviewed the Board about this decision to close the branches. This decision was changed. The Board's decision to charge a ten-cent user fee enabled the branch librarians to involve the community in a new issue. The taping of users of these branch libraries through the interactive media process helped to highlight the issue. The resulting decision to rescind the user fee was a second victory for the branch librarians.

The general consensus as to the value of interactive media in solving these issues was that the process enabled the branch librarians to evaluate the issues objectively, allowed for community input, and caused the Board to act in a responsible

manner. In fact, there was a consensus that interactive media had proved to be an intervention that legitimized the action, provided group support, structured the confrontation, and summarized the action.

The branch librarians' decision to continue to use the interactive media as a process tool in their meetings with supervisors was taken without proper background preparation, according to two of the librarians interviewed. In this case, interactive media did not provide a means to move an action. Although the branch libraries were eventually closed, the process of interactive media was highly valued by the librarians, who vowed that they would use it again in the future.

The CRIMP Project, which focused on the issue of retaining the VTR equipment, was seen as a win for the community. One of the individuals interviewed felt that this was the first time that the community had come together without the assistance of Northern Illinois University. The organizational thinking behind the CRIMP Project was that the twelve-month period was too short a time for maximum impact by the Interactive Media Project. Retention of the equipment was needed to complete projects in process and to begin new ones. One person felt that the decision to allow the community to retain the equipment provided emotional help and reassurance that CRIMP is doing the right thing.

Another person felt that involvement of members of the community in the interactive media project enabled them to fun-

ction as an articulate, organized group in presenting their case to the State Director, Title 1-A. He believed that:

> the entire project and the resulting meeting that concluded the project, at least for this year, which also renewed it for another year, is a testimonial of sorts to the success of the project, to the worth of the initial planning for the project, and to the very idea of the project....we were able to bring together a large number of members of the community of disparate philosophies, of different organizations, even of different religious persuasions, people who range from both ends of the political spectrum, in terms ranging from stark conservatives to raving radicals; and then we were able to successfully meet with, communicate with, and win out over a bureaucratic system which had already determined, without consultation with us, what they were going to do in terms of the project that was very important to us as a community. I see the interactive media project....to be on-going, not just next year, but years after. What it has introduced to the community is a sophisticated means of approaching one of the most important institutions in our modern culture, which is the electronic media.

Finally, interviews were conducted with individuals whose advocacy projects were either aborted or in progress. One individual commented as follow:

> When I used the tape, it was a high risk situation. What I mean is that I could have lost my job because some things and issues were political. I ran across things I shouldn't have found. It caused problems more than once; so I had to back down and leave it alone.

Conclusions

The Rockford Interactive Media Project, a broad-aimed social program, represents a case study of how one community used the process of interactive media to become involved with issues affecting it. For members of the community, a num-

ber of important insights were learned. While the group implemented only a limited number of projects designed to initiate communication with local government officials, they did experience success with the process; indeed, they recognized its importance as a means of developing leadership.

The success of their final project heightened the self-esteem of the community and should enable it to continue to become involved in important decisions which effect it.

A very significant outcome was the fact that a large number of people acquired the competence to handle equipment and others acquired the technical skills required to edit the tapes. These taping and editing capabilities are, in themselves, an astounding accomplishment for this project of less then a year's duration.

An important outcome of the Interactive Media Project should be the sharing of this experience with other communities. One suggestion here would be that social action programs which are creative and innovative in nature should be funded for a minimum of two years. The utilization of VTR, whether in a service or an advocacy capacity, requires a period of lead time. During this time, the community members must learn to fully comprehend what the innovation can do and how to incorporate it in the search for solutions to community problems. Finally, a word of caution seems in order: it must be borne in mind that any decision to use interactive media in a community may prove threatening to some groups. Sometimes opposition comes from the least expected sources.

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APPENDIX A

Wagner's List of Concepts and Instrument

WAGNER CONCEPTS

Risk Level Factors

CONTROL is defined as the degree to which the subject involved in a proposed process perceives his ability to affect the decision-making involved in the proposed process.

VALUE OF POTENTIAL LOSS OR GAIN is defined as an estimate, by the subject(s) involved in the proposed process, of the value of what may be lost or gained by the subject(s) if the process continues as originally proposed.

OUTCOME VISIBILITY is defined as the degree to which the subject involved in a proposed process can envision (i) the eventual outcome of the process proposed, and (ii) the precise process leading to the outcome.

Reference Level Factors

INFORMATION IMMEDIACY the time interval between the presentation of information to the subject(s) and the subsequent VTR documentation of the reaction of the subject(s) to that information.

ISSUE STRENGTH the emotionally based motivation that a subject uses to direct himself or herself at resolving a specific issue or concern.

ROUTINENESS a process that occurs repeatedly, so that while in process the subject can anticipate the process and is not required to synthesize information or deal with the unexpected.

Case Number | Date | Location

Animat(s)

Subject(s)

Description

Risk Judgment

Process Deviation (Observed)

RISK LEVEL			REFERENCE LEVEL		
Control	Outcome Visibility	VPL	Interaction Intensity	Force Strength	Routineness

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions and Interviewees

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

How & why did you become involved in the video tape Interactive Media Project?

Do you feel the VTR process helped to accomplish the goal of your particular project? Why or why not?

What impact do you think VTR had on the project, if any?

What effect do you think the media had on the people who have viewed the tapes?

Did the VTR help you to communicate more effectively within the group? Please explain.

Did the VTR enable the group to make a statement? Please explain.

Did the edited tape present the case in the most effective way? Please explain.

Does the group feel the tape belongs to them literally in the sense that it faithfully reflects the group members' point of view? Please explain.

Did you feel yourself in control of the VTR at all times? Please explain.

Do you think that a different approach could have been used with the VTR process? Please explain.

What events, if any, that should have taken place did not take place? Please explain.

After your experience, do you want to learn to operate the VTR equipment? Please explain.

Did interactive media assist you in clarifying your position?

Did you find yourself out of line with the views of other people?

What has been the reaction of other staff to you since your involvement with the VTR process?

Was this the first time that the community organized around the Interactive Media Project without the assistance of NIU?

What do you see as the future use(s) of VTR in the community?